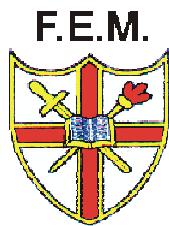


Sounding the Trumpet

April - June 2012



Annual General Meeting 2012

Fellowship of Evangelistic Ministries

By kind invitation our AGM will be held at:

Boundary Street Evangelical Church
Fernley Road, Birkdale
Southport, Merseyside
PR8 5AU

28 April 2012

AGM: 1:30 - 2.30 pm

Refreshments provided

Report and Celebration Meeting: 4:00 pm

All members of the Fellowship of Evangelistic Ministries are invited to the AGM. Why not bring a friend so that they can be introduced to the work and ministry of FEM!

General Enquiries:

Fellowship of Evangelistic Ministries,
Hunslet Nazarene Church, Lupton Street,
Hunslet, LS10 2QR.
Enquiries: administrator@femonline.co.uk

Where are the Christians?

“The disciples were called Christians first in Antioch”
(Acts 11:26).

We have always called ourselves Christians because of our identification with the Lord Jesus Christ; therefore we consider that we are worthy to bear His name. Unfortunately the word ‘Christian’ has little meaning today, for people of all denominations, the nominal churchgoer and the irreligious apply it to themselves. Many think they are Christians because they were sprinkled by a priest or born in a so-called Christian nation. So many people are happy to call themselves Christian but will not accept or apply the teachings of The Lord Jesus Christ.

Called Christian

Our text tells us that “the disciples were called Christians”, that is, they did not call themselves this, but it was a nickname given to them by the people in Antioch. It may have been an offensive term to ridicule those who were committed to Christ. Whatever the people of Antioch intended by the word, it is certain that the believers there continued to proclaim their faith in the Lord.

We also note that there was no such thing as a ‘Christian church’ in the first century, for it was not the church but individual believers that were called Christian. The Antiochians specifically called “the disciples” this name rather than it being a label to cover everyone who tagged themselves to the early church. Therefore only true followers of Christ have the right to be called Christians. We see in Scripture, and it is evident in our churches today, that many profess faith in Christ but have none of the commitment needed to be His disciples. They have simply joined a church organisation without giving any serious thought of what it means to be a follower of Christ. Do they have the qualifications to be Christians?

Confessed Christian

“Then he called his twelve disciples together, and gave them power and authority over all devils, and to cure diseases. And he sent them to preach the kingdom of God, and to heal the sick” (Luke 9:1-2). Here is the true Christian calling, for Jesus not only calls us but also sends us out to serve Him. As in tennis, you will lose if your service is rubbish. It is this obedience to Christ that separated the disciples from the nominal followers in Antioch. Luke tells us that the twelve disciples had great success in their ministries, but on their return Jesus “took them, and went aside privately into a desert place” (Luke 9:10), and asked them, “Whom say ye that I am?”, to which Peter replied, “The Christ of God” (Luke 9:20). That confession is considered to be the hallmark of a Christian today, but is it? Is simply confessing to know who Jesus is the singular evidence that a person is a disciple of Christ? Jesus made it clear that it would take more than that to be His follower, “If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me” (Luke 9:23).

Committed Christian

We see then that to be a Christian is more than being called by the name or simply confessing to know the Lord. It has to include self-denial and obedience too. A committed Christian is someone who has made a deliberate choice and is resolved to follow Christ wherever He may lead. This is not an emotional response to a fiery sermon, but a heartfelt desire to be true to the Lord in every aspect of our lives. To follow Him also means to love Him so much that our love for others would look like hate compared with our commitment to Him. “If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple” (Luke 14:26). This is part of that cross-bearing we read of earlier. “And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple” (Luke 14:27).

To take up the cross is to commit to the life of true discipleship and be willing to give ourselves wholly to the Lord (2 Corinthians 8:5). Taking up the cross is a one-time

commitment that is to be kept for a lifetime, but we are called to daily examine our lives and eliminate everything that could hinder our devotion to Christ. “Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God” (Hebrews 12:1-2). In Colossians 3:5 Paul tells us that we have to put to death all that rises up to sever our relationship with the Lord, “Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry.” Also in Romans 8:13-14 he implies the daily need for doing this, “For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.”

Do we call ourselves Christians just because we confessed faith in Christ sometime in the past? Some may object to this statement and quote Romans 10:9, “That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved”, but Paul’s point here is that true faith must be in the heart of the one confessing Christ to be saved. “For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation” (Romans 10:10). Confessing with the mouth is meaningless if faith is not in the heart. Let us not forget what Jesus taught on this subject, “Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven” (Matthew 7:21). A committed Christian continuously looks at his or her spiritual condition and rectifies anything that is offensive to Christ. “Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?” (2 Corinthians 13:5). So where are the Christians today?

Gary J. Hall

Jonah

A Series by David Moody

4:1. “But it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he was very angry.” Jonah was angry because God had given the people of Nineveh another opportunity and had forgotten that is just what God had done for him when he cried out in the belly of the great fish. Sometimes we are angry when God extends to others the same mercy and grace that he has extended to us. Jonah retired from his work for God with anger and bitterness in his spirit towards God.

4:2. “And he prayed unto the LORD, and said, I pray thee, O LORD, was not this my saying, when I was yet in my country? Therefore I fled before unto Tarshish: for I knew that thou art a gracious God, and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repentest thee of the evil.” Jonah is angry and starts remonstrating with God and here we see the old Jonah arguing with God’s about His character. He accused God of not keeping His word. His words proved that this was a revival of the old Jonah. “Was not this my saying, when I was yet in my country? Therefore I fled before unto Tarshish“.

4:3. “Therefore now, O LORD, take, I beseech thee, my life from me; for it is better for me to die than to live.” Now we see a sullen, petulant spirit, requesting that he might die, feeling that God had made a fool of him in sending him to proclaim a judgement that He was not now going to execute. Jonah’s words “for it is better for me to die than to live.” were the expression of truth, the old Jonah had to die again. Here we see the need for each one of us, daily sanctification. Though salvation is a once and for all experience, and can never, and needs never to be repeated, yet sanctification is renewed day by day. We can never reach a

state while we are here, when we can truthfully say that we are experimentally wholly sanctified, a state of sinless perfection. We will only reach that state when we reach the glory, and the old nature, the flesh, is forever left behind. While ever we are here in our present bodies of humiliation, the flesh will remain in us. Through acceptance by faith of the cross of Christ as our own, by reckoning ourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God. By yielding ourselves to the Lordship of Christ, and the sovereign control, empowering, and leading of the Holy Spirit, we experience liberation from self, and the power of indwelling sin. Yet the principle of sin still remains within us, the old nature, the flesh is still there. If we give it the least opportunity it will again exert its power and control over us, and manifest its ugly characteristics in our lives. That is why we have to “die daily” [1 Cor. 15:31] “Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus” [2 Cor. 4:10]. That is why “We are killed all day long” [Rom. 8:36] and why the Lord Jesus tells us to “deny” ourselves, and take up His cross “daily” [Luke 9:23]. Truly it is better for me [the old me] to die than to live, so that the lovely characteristics of Christ, His beauty and compassion may be seen in me.

4:4. “Then said the LORD, Doest thou well to be angry?” The Lord asked Jonah whether his anger was justified. What a patient loving God He is! God could have told Jonah that judgment would come but it would be at a later time.

4:5. “So Jonah went out of the city, and sat on the east side of the city, and there made him a booth, and sat under it in the shadow, till he might see what would become of the city.” So Jonah retired from the service of evangelism and instead became concerned about his own personal comfort. He built a shelter for himself, and sat in his little house. Are there some like him today, “evangelists” who do not spread the good news, “workers” who do not work. “Servants of the Lord” who spend most of their time worrying about support and writing begging [prayer?] letters, making appeals.

Talking Together

“And they talked together of all these things which had happened” (Luke 24:14).

Through the years I have always regarded it a privilege to listen to Christian people, especially when their conversation centred on the Lord Jesus Christ. It is still the same today for me.

To hear some of the finest preacher’s in the country at our church in Leeds speaking at the Easter Conventions was utterly inspiring for me. I thanked the Lord for their ministry and the way in which the Word of God became alive and meaningful. It was opened up for all present to receive the glittering treasure of eternal truth in the one and only Gospel of the Cross of Calvary.

‘They talked of all the things that had happened’. Preacher’s in the pulpit, - humble, powerful, enlightening, delivering real food that satisfied the soul and yet left one wanting more of the same.

The men talking together were well studied in the Word of God and filled with the Holy Spirit. They were life experienced and practical in teaching and ministry. They did not talk about how many people were in their churches or about how much money came in each week. It was not about building extensions or financial needs every week. The message was about the Lord of Glory. Sin, righteousness and judgement to come, was the permanent basis for every sermon. How utterly good God was and how tragically bad we are, with the glorious Gospel the complete answer. At times we repented, at times we rejoiced it was indeed a 24/7 life of commitment to the Lord.

How much could we possibly do for our Lord Jesus Christ, rather than how little would be acceptable to the Saviour of Men. We thank God for such men and woman today, what a role

they play across the country with loving honest Bible based messages from heaven. This country needs the Gospel as never before, so let's keep talking together.

Frank Rowley

Marshside Christian Fellowship

Our Church meets at the Marshside Temperance Hall, Shellfield Road, Southport, Merseyside, PR9 9UR.

We are an Independent, non-denominational fellowship. Our aim and mission statement is to reach out to our community with the gospel message. That through repentance towards God, and trust and belief in the Lord Jesus Christ as personal Saviour, we can have forgiveness of sins and eternal life. We would like to welcome you to worship with us 10:45 am every Sunday.

Richard Hardy

www.femonline.co.uk
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